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United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo

Report of the Secretary-General

I. Introduction

1. The present report is submitted pursuant to paragraph 59 of Security Council resolution 2409 (2018). It covers major developments in the Democratic Republic of the Congo for the period from 29 June to 28 September 2018. The report describes progress in the implementation of the mandate of the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO); provides an overview of political developments since my previous update on progress in the electoral process and implementation of the political agreement of 31 December 2016 (S/2018/786); outlines progress in adjustments to the Mission's priorities, posture and presence, as well as the pursuit of its comprehensive approach to the protection of civilians; and provides information on the performance of MONUSCO uniformed personnel.

II. Major developments

A. Political situation

2. The political situation was marked by political and judicial activities surrounding the registration process of candidates for the presidential and national and provincial legislative elections. On 3 September, the Constitutional Court ruled on the appeals of four of the six presidential candidates who had been declared ineligible by the Independent National Electoral Commission on 24 August. The Court upheld the ineligibility of Jean-Pierre Bemba, the leader of the Mouvement de libération du Congo (MLC), ruling that the International Criminal Court had convicted him for witness tampering through corruption, which was an aggravating factor. The Constitutional Court rejected the appeal of former Prime Minister Adolphe Muzito, who had been declared ineligible for conflict of interest, noting that his claim to be reinstated as a presidential candidate was unsubstantiated. The Court, however, upheld the appeals of former Prime Minister Samy Badibanga and opposition leader Marie-Josée Ifoku and ordered the Commission to reinstate them as presidential candidates, as they had provided evidence that they held Congolese citizenship.

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3. The Secretary-General of MLC, Eve Bazaïba, stated that the ruling of the Constitutional Court was a political decision intended to disqualify a serious contender and, in so doing, tarnished the image of the Democratic Republic of the Congo. On 4 September, Mr. Bemba declared to the press that the judiciary was being manipulated to disqualify any heavyweight candidate who posed a serious challenge to the presidential candidate of the ruling majority. He added that the Government was setting the stage for a sham election on 23 December. Several other opposition leaders voiced similar concerns and criticisms. The Minister of Information and spokesperson of the Government, Lambert Mende, rejected the allegations of Mr. Bemba and urged him to respect the decision of the Court, the Constitution and the rule of law. In addition, on 4 September, the Court upheld the decision of the Independent National Electoral Commission to declare ineligible presidential candidates Antoine Gizenga, a former Prime Minister, and opposition leader Jean-Paul Moka for procedural errors during the registration process and lack of proof of payment of registration fees, respectively.

4. On 12 September, opposition leaders Adolphe Muzito, Antipas Mbusa Nyamwisi, Félix Tshisekedi, Jean-Pierre Bemba, Moïse Katumbi and Vital Kamerhe met in Brussels and issued a joint communiqué in which they stressed the need for holding free, democratic, transparent and inclusive elections on 23 December, in line with the political agreement of 31 December 2016 and the electoral calendar. Among other things, they rejected the decision of the Independent National Electoral Commission to use voting machines, requested the removal of alleged fraudulent voters from the electoral roll, called for the swift implementation of confidence-building measures, urged the Southern African Development Community to deploy a regional force to ensure security during the electoral period and demanded that candidates declared ineligible "on political grounds" be allowed to take part in the elections. On the same day, the Minister of Information stated in a radio interview that the meeting had discredited those Congolese, who had no sense of national dignity after 58 years of independence.

5. From 10 to 12 September, the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Belgium, Didier Reynders, visited South Africa, Angola and the Republic of the Congo, where he exchanged views with senior government officials on a wide range of issues, including the situation in the Great Lakes region and the Democratic Republic of the Congo. On 11 September, in Luanda, Minister Reynders and the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Angola, Manuel Domingos Augusto, issued a joint communiqué in which they noted, among other things, the importance of a truly inclusive process leading to credible, free and transparent elections on 23 December. On 12 September, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Democratic Republic of the Congo issued a communiqué in which he stressed the rejection by the Government of any interference by neighbouring countries and bilateral partners in the electoral process and called for the strict respect of the sovereignty of his country.

6. The Independent National Electoral Commission continued preparations for the holding of elections on 23 December and published the provisional voter register, which included 40,287,385 voters, on 3 September. The Commission noted that 5,381,763 duplicates and multiple registrations and 902,290 minors had been removed from the register.

7. On 19 September, the Commission published the final list of presidential candidates, which included 21 candidates. On the same day, it published the final list of candidates for national legislative elections, with 15,355 candidates competing for 500 National Assembly seats. As for the final list of candidates for provincial legislative elections, 19,640 candidates, comprising 17,284 men (88 per cent) and 2,356 women (12 per cent), are contesting 715 seats.

8. The Commission, in line with the Government's decision to assume full financial and logistical responsibility for the elections, carried on with the technical and logistical preparations for the elections. MONUSCO continued to engage the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo on the need to give landing clearance to the air assets prepositioned in Entebbe, Uganda.

9. The second and last ordinary parliamentary session of the year opened on 15 September. The Speaker of the National Assembly, Aubin Minaku, and the President of the Senate, Léon Kengo wa Dondo, noted that emphasis should be put on the electoral process and the swift adoption of the 2019 budget.

10. The Government and the National Follow-up Committee continued to make efforts towards the implementation of the national commitments under the Peace, Security and Cooperation Framework for the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the Region. The Government also continued to call upon the other signatories to the Framework to honour their commitments.

B. Economic developments

11. The macroeconomic framework of the Democratic Republic of the Congo showed signs of stabilization, as inflation continued to decelerate slightly. The Congolese franc also remained relatively stable, largely owing to a year-long increase in key commodity prices on international markets. Those commodities (cobalt, copper and oil) had, however, begun to experience a serious downturn during the reporting period. On 10 July, the Banque centrale du Congo announced that its foreign exchange reserves had risen to $1.2 billion in the first half of 2018, maintaining their upward trend.

C. Security situation

12. The security situation remained fragile in some parts of eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo, in particular in Beni, Lubero and Masisi territories in North Kivu, and on the high plateaux of Uvira, the border areas of Maniema and Tanganyika provinces, and in Shabunda territory in South Kivu, where armed groups continued to carry out destabilizing activities. The situation deteriorated in parts of Haut-Uélé province, as a result of cross-border movements of South Sudanese armed elements, while in Ituri province, violence between Hema and Lendu communities continued to decrease. However, clashes occurred in mid-September between Lendu militia and the Armed Forces of the Democratic Republic of the Congo (FARDC). In the western part of the country, some areas of the Kasai region continued to grapple with the illegal activities of Kamuina Nsapu and Bana Mura militias, and there were reports of human rights violations by some national security forces.

1. Ituri province

13. In Ituri, the Force de résistance patriotique de l'Ituri (FRPI) continued to commit exactions on civilians and to carry out attacks against FARDC. Violence against civilians, including raids and looting of villages, was perpetrated by FRPI, which carried out seven raids in Aveba and Gety on 14 and 15 July. Five other raids took place in the same area between 21 and 23 July. In addition, on 11 and 12 August, FRPI looted villages in the general area of Bavi and Bogoro, to the north of Aveba and Gety.

14. Elsewhere in Ituri, in Djugu territory, intercommunal violence has decreased significantly since April 2018. However, some isolated incidents between Hema and Lendu communities occurred in August, and there was a spike of clashes between

FARDC and Lendu militias in September. On 3 August, suspected Hema young people injured a Lendu woman in Djokwa (65 km north-east of Bunia). On the same day, individuals allegedly from the Lendu group burned houses belonging to Hema people in Tsu village, in the Tchomia area. On 26 August, two FARDC soldiers were killed in Wassa village, allegedly by Lendu assailants. In an apparent retaliation operation, FARDC reportedly looted civilians in the Lendu villages of Djailo and Loko. On 15 September, in Djugu territory, militia members allegedly from the Lendu community attacked FARDC position in Muvaramu (80 km north-east of Bunia), stealing weapons and ammunition and killing nine FARDC soldiers and six civilians. Further attacks by suspected Lendu militia members took place on 18 September against four FARDC positions in Gobi, Jiro, Nyoro and Ziro, reportedly killing three soldiers. FARDC captured three assailants. In response, FARDC launched operations that resulted in the killing of eight militia members and two FARDC soldiers and in the recovery of weapons.

2. North Kivu and South Kivu

15. In North Kivu, after a lull, the Allied Democratic Forces (ADF) resumed in July attacks against FARDC, MONUSCO and civilians in Beni territory. Most attacks targeting FARDC took place along the Eringeti-Oicha and Mbau-Kamango axes. On 12 July, a clash between ADF and FARDC in the PK13 neighbourhood in the Mbau area resulted in one FARDC soldier missing in action. On 14 July, ADF attacked FARDC in Mapiki and Masulukwede in the Oicha and Mavivi areas, respectively, resulting in the killing of three civilians and one FARDC soldier. On 24 August, an attack by suspected ADF elements on an FARDC position in Ngadi (on the Beni-Mavivi road) resulted in the killing of 17 FARDC elements and the theft of weapons and ammunitions. Suspected ADF elements and MONUSCO troops clashed on several occasions. On 6 July, suspected ADF elements ambushed MONUSCO troops in Boikene and injured two peacekeepers. On 29 July, a group of suspected ADF elements opened fire on the MONUSCO company operating base in Semuliki, triggering an exchange of fire. On 3 September, two MONUSCO peacekeepers were injured in an ambush by suspected ADF elements in the Ngadi area. Civilians continued to be the target of attacks by suspected ADF elements, resulting in the killing of at least 120 civilians since January. On 22 and 23 July, the bodies of six civilians reportedly killed by ADF were discovered in the Mavivi-Masulukwede area. On 2 August, ADF abducted 14 civilians, whose bodies were found in the jungle surrounding Boikene on 7 August. On the same day, suspected ADF abducted 15 civilians in Ngere-Mwalika (30 km south of Beni). On 9 September, simultaneous attacks by alleged ADF elements on villages on the Beni-Mavivi road resulted in the death of a civilian and triggered a displacement of population towards the city of Beni.

16. Further south, Mai-Mai Mazembe groups, Nduma défense du Congo-Rénové (NDC-R) and Mai-Mai Charles continued to destabilize the Butembo-Lubero area. NDC-R ran a parallel administration in the Kasugho area (45 km west of Lubero) until mid-August. On 20 July, NDC-R temporarily detained 45 civilians in Kasugho for failing to pay the armed group's illegal taxes. On 3 August, up to 150 people were detained for the same reason. Twenty-five people remained in detention as at 5 August. The exactions continued until 14 August, when FARDC launched an operation against NDC-R elements and captured their strongholds in Kagheri and Kasugho. However, NDC-R reinforced its positions and clashed with other Mai-Mai groups on 31 August. On 14 September, NDC-R occupied the Pitakongo village (55 km west of Kirumba).

17. Mai-Mai Charles demonstrated resilience after sustaining several FARDC attacks. On 11 July, its members attacked an FARDC position in Chondo (40 km

north-west of Nyamilima). The situation in areas along Lake Edward remained tense owing to a combination of the group's presence, disputes over border demarcation with Uganda and illegal fishing activities. Tension started to rise following the arrest of 46 Congolese fishermen by Ugandan naval forces on 4 May. On 5 July, at least seven Ugandan nationals (four members of the Uganda People's Defence Forces and three civilians) and three Congolese (two members of FARDC and one civilian) were killed during a clash on Lake Edward, near Kyavinyonge.

18. In Masisi territory, there was internal fighting between two rival factions of the Alliance des patriotes pour un Congo libre et souverain (APCLS) in the general area of Nyabiondo. Clashes between APCLS "Colonel" Janvier (supported by some Nyatura groups) and APCLS-Mapenzi started in early 2018 and intensified until July, resulting in a massive population displacement towards Nyabiondo and Pinga, as well as sexual violence and killings. The situation returned to normal when "Colonel" Janvier withdrew from his stronghold in Lukweti and reportedly fled to Kalungu on the border of Masisi and Walikale territories.

19. In South Kivu, the security situation was marred by violence between the Banyamulenge and other communities, notably the Bembe, and their respective armed groups on the high plateaux of Uvira. On 7 July, 10 civilians died in a clash between those groups in the Balala-Nord groupement, at the border of Fizi and Uvira territories. On 8 July, Ngomino (a Banyamulenge armed group) clashed with Mai-Mai groups in Kangwe (80 km north-west of Minembwe), resulting in the deaths of two civilians, the burning down of 20 houses and the displacement of civilian populations. Intercommunal violence in the area led to the displacement of around 76,000 people. The border area of Burundi and Uvira territory remained a zone of tension, with elements allegedly belonging to the Forces nationales de libération (FNL) of Burundi regrouping in the Ruzizi Plain. The movement of those elements in areas of Fizi and Uvira territories has increased since the beginning of September. An attack by FNL elements on a Burundian border post on 14 September resulted in the killing of two FNL elements and one Burundian soldier.

20. After a lull of a few months, fighting resumed in mid-September between FARDC and Mai-Mai Yakutumba on the Kilembwe axis (in the border areas of South Kivu and Maniema provinces and close to Tanganyika). Clashes occurred between FARDC and a coalition of Mai-Mai Malaika and Mai-Mai Yakutumba in areas surrounding Minembwe. On 18 September, FARDC elements were allegedly ambushed by a group of Mai-Mai elements in Mutombo (15 km north of Minembwe), reportedly resulting in the killing of 15 FARDC soldiers.

21. Civilians in Shabunda territory remained affected by exactions perpetrated by Mai-Mai Raia Mutomboki groups during the reporting period. The upsurge of violence that began in early 2018 continued during the reporting period. Among other incidents, on 19 July, Mai-Mai Raia Mutomboki (Kazimoto factions) abducted 15 civilians in Nyambembe. On 23 July, Kazimoto factions attacked and looted the village of Mulimbwa (90 km north-east of Shabunda).

3. Tanganyika province

22. The activities of Mai-Mai Apa Na Pale, Bafuliro and Twa militias posed the main threats to civilians and security challenges to FARDC in northern Tanganyika, notably in the Bendera area, in Kalemie territory. In early July, Mai-Mai groups established a parallel administration in the Lambo-Katenga groupement (west of Bendera) and committed multiple exactions against civilians, including looting, extortion and ambushes. On 10 July, they abducted 30 civilians, including 16 women, in Mutupeke (36 km north-west of Bendera). Towards the end of July, FARDC redeployed troops from Pweto and Kasomeno (160 km north-east of Lubumbashi) to

Bendera and Nyunzu, with a view to launching operations against Mai-Mai groups operating around mining sites. In response, Mai-Mai Apa Na Pale elements reinforced their presence around Lambo-Katenga.

4. Haut-Uélé

23. In Haut-Uélé, the security situation along the border of the Democratic Republic of the Congo and South Sudan has deteriorated over the past two months owing to increasing cross-border movements of South Sudanese armed elements, notably the Sudan People's Liberation Movement-Army in Opposition (SPLM/A-IO). The presence of that group was reported in the Nabiapay area (32 km north-west of Duru). On 12 July, there were clashes between security forces of the Democratic Republic of the Congo and SPLM/A-IO elements in Limbamu (4 km south of Duru), Mogoroko (24 km north-west of Duru) and Nambia (7 km south-east of Duru). On 30 July, further clashes took place in Bangalu, Kpanangbala and Masombo, in the Dungu area. In addition, around 90,000 South Sudanese civilians have sought refuge in the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

5. Kasai region

24. The security situation in some parts of the Kasai region remained fragile owing to the renewed activities of Kamuina Nsapu and forced recruitment in Kamonia territory, Kasai province, in reaction to continued harassment of ethnic Luba communities by the Bana Mura militia. To the north-east, on the Mweka-Demba axis in Kasai Central, Kamuina Nsapu militia members led by Beya Tshombe consolidated their control over the local population, forcing some civilians to disavow State authority. There were also reports of isolated elements of national security forces committing human rights violations, including rape, killing and looting.

D. Humanitarian situation

25. The humanitarian situation in the Democratic Republic of the Congo remains worrying. According to the latest humanitarian needs assessment, conducted in October 2017, 13.1 million people need protection and humanitarian assistance, 7.7 million face food insecurity and 4.5 million are internally displaced. The country is home to more than 535,000 refugees from neighbouring countries, while more than 781,000 nationals of the Democratic Republic of the Congo have sought refuge in other countries in the region. To date, the 2018 humanitarian response plan has received $398.4 million, representing 24 per cent of its funding requirements, while the regional refugee response plan for refugees of the Democratic Republic of the Congo has only received 11 per cent of the $368.7 million required.

26. On 11 and 12 July, the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs organized a workshop, with the participation of the relevant national authorities, to validate the process and methodologies for defining humanitarian needs in 2019. The objective was to present a shared analysis of the humanitarian situation in the Democratic Republic of the Congo by October. To that end, joint teams of government representatives and humanitarian actors commenced assessing the humanitarian situation in priority provinces.

27. On 1 August, the Ministry of Health of the Democratic Republic of the Congo declared the outbreak of the Ebola virus disease in Mangina, 30 km north-west of Beni, North Kivu province, affecting also neighbouring Ituri. On 1 August, the Ministry notified the World Health Organization (WHO) of a new outbreak in the eastern part of the country. As at 29 September, a total of 159 confirmed and probable Ebola virus disease cases, including 104 deaths, had been reported. The outbreak

centred on the Mangina health zone, but the Beni and Butembo health zones were also significantly affected. The response to the epidemic has proved to be quite effective, owing in part to the close cooperation of the national health authorities with the United Nations and non-governmental organizations, as well as to the application of lessons learned from the recent Ebola virus disease outbreak in Équateur province. Functional coordination structures are in place and adequate capacities were deployed into the area within the first few days of the declaration of the outbreak. The United Nations system has provided extensive technical, logistical and security support to the response to the outbreak. The MONUSCO force has also played an instrumental role in Ebola response efforts, including by conducting operations to address the persistent threat of armed groups and to protect humanitarian space.

28. A comprehensive response plan covering the period from August to October is being implemented under the leadership of the Minister of Health, with support from WHO.

29. The cholera epidemic continued to spread, with 17,822 cases and 573 deaths reported across 13 of the 26 provinces as of late August. As part of the support of the humanitarian community for the health authorities of the Democratic Republic of the Congo to address the epidemic, the Humanitarian Coordinator allocated $3 million from the common humanitarian fund.

E. Human rights situation, justice and corrections

30. MONUSCO documented 1,135 human rights violations in July and August 2018, which represents a significant increase compared with the same period in 2017 (840 violations), but a decrease compared with April and May 2018 (1,183 violations), illustrating the worrying human rights situation in the country. More than 81 per cent of those violations occurred in conflict-affected provinces, with North Kivu being most affected, notably because of the activities of armed groups.

31. Throughout the country, 59 per cent of the violations were perpetrated by State agents, a decrease in comparison with the previous period, while armed groups and militias were responsible for the remaining violations. In July and August, 163 persons, including at least 36 women, were victims of extrajudicial killings or summary executions (with 33 victims attributed to State agents and 120 to armed groups), and more than 1,091 victims, including 97 women and 12 children, were illegally deprived of their freedom by either State agents or armed groups.

32. While some demonstrations and gatherings were held without incident, restrictions on democratic space continued to impede the establishment of an environment conducive to credible, peaceful and transparent elections. At least 134 violations of human rights linked to restrictions on fundamental freedoms and political rights, especially targeting civil society activists and members of political parties, were documented. Most violations occurred in Haut-Katanga, followed by North Kivu, where nine were perpetrated by armed groups, targeting notably journalists and community radios for having denounced the abuses perpetrated by those groups.

33. Some progress was made towards the implementation of the confidence-building measures provided for in the political agreement of 31 December 2016, but some challenges remain. On 13 July, 25 people were released from the National Intelligence Agency detention facility. However, prolonged detentions by the Agency without judicial review remained a matter of great concern. On 5 September, the Supreme Court upheld the sentencing to five years in prison of Franck Diongo, the leader of the opposition party Mouvement lumumbiste progressiste. He had been convicted on 28 December 2016 in a *flagrante delicto* procedure for illegally

detaining three soldiers of the Republican Guard. The Working Group on Arbitrary Detention of the United Nations and national human rights organizations have called for his release, and the political agreement provides for his release as part of the confidence-building measures to be taken by the Government.

34. MONUSCO continued to provide technical and logistical support to military and civilian justice institutions in addressing cases of international crimes and other serious human rights violations and abuses in the eastern provinces and the Kasai region. On 26 July, the High Military Court, sitting in mobile court hearings in Bukavu (South Kivu), concluded appeal hearings on five priority cases identified by national courts. The Court confirmed the convictions and sentences rendered by the military court of South Kivu against senior FARDC officers and a member of the South Kivu provincial parliament for crimes against humanity in the "Colonel 106", "Kavumu" and "Marocain" cases. In the other two cases, the Court reduced to a two-year prison term the sentence of FARDC Colonel Becker, who had been convicted to 10 years in prison for crimes against humanity committed in Musenyi, Kalehe territory, on 21 September 2015, and it acquitted for lack of evidence an FARDC major and a civilian of violation of orders and illegal possession of weapons during the massacre of civilians that had occurred on 6 and 7 June 2016 in Mutarule, Uvira territory.

35. In North Kivu, in another priority case supported by MONUSCO, on 14 July, the military garrison tribunal of Goma convicted Dominique Buyenge of war crimes for the recruitment and use of children as combatants, rape and murder, and sentenced him to life imprisonment. In July, with MONUSCO logistical support, the military garrison tribunal of Bunia launched the trial of 72 persons charged with crimes against humanity, including one FARDC element and one Congolese National Police agent charged with rape during the mass atrocities perpetrated in Djugu, in March 2018.

36. In July, with the technical support of the MONUSCO Prosecution Support Cell in Beni, national security forces arrested three members of the Union des patriotes pour la libération du Congo. They were arrested in the context of investigations into the attack launched by the armed group on Butembo city on 19 December 2016, which had resulted in the death of a MONUSCO peacekeeper.

37. On 26 July, MONUSCO identified 31 cases of prolonged detention in the Uvira district prison. Subsequent discussions with the prosecutor's office led to the release of seven detainees, the processing of 10 cases by the Uvira tribunal and the closing of the investigation into the other 14 detainees. Prisons nationwide continued to suffer from the irregular, delayed and inadequate provision of adequate nutrition and medical care to prisoners. MONUSCO recorded 28 deaths from malnutrition in the Bunia, Goma and Mbuji-Mayi prisons. MONUSCO continued to encourage national and provincial authorities to address the situation.

F. Sexual violence

38. In July and August 2018, MONUSCO documented the rape of and other acts of conflict-related sexual violence against at least 129 women, two men, and 39 children, indicating a worrying increasing trend. Most of the rapes occurred in South Kivu. On 25 July, MONUSCO informed the government authorities of the findings of a human rights investigation into rapes, mass rapes and other acts of sexual violence perpetrated by a coalition of Mai-Mai Raia Mutomboki combatants in the villages of Bimpanga, Kamungini, Keba and Wameli, in Shabunda territory, in April 2018. Although some survivors received medical care, the holistic response was insufficient. Consequently, from 5 to 11 September, MONUSCO supported the Panzi Foundation in the provision of medical, psychosocial and legal assistance to

207 persons, including 62 survivors of sexual violence. Meanwhile, MONUSCO continued its advocacy efforts for the opening of a judicial investigation.

39. MONUSCO continued to collaborate with the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo on the implementation of the FARDC action plan against sexual violence, including by engaging with the Office of the Special Adviser to the Head of State on the Prevention of Sexual Violence and Child Recruitment. In the Kasai region, MONUSCO provided trainings to FARDC commanders on the fight against sexual violence, which included the signing of a declaration of commitment by 66 FARDC commanders to combating sexual violence in their ranks. Additional trainings for FARDC commanders were conducted in Goma, Kinshasa and Lubumbashi. The action plan against sexual violence of the Congolese National Police was finalized and submitted for signature to the Vice-Prime Minister and Minister of the Interior.

G. Child protection

40. MONUSCO verified 176 grave violations against children through the monitoring and reporting mechanism on grave violations against children in situations of armed conflict. At least 158 children (14 girls and 144 boys) escaped or were separated from armed groups, including the Forces combattantes abacunguzi, FRPI, Mai-Mai Mazembe and Nyatura, mainly in North Kivu. Three girls survived rape and other forms of sexual violence. Five children (two girls and three boys) were maimed and nine boys were abducted. One case of denial of humanitarian access was reported, in South Kivu.

41. On 11 July in Hombo, Walikale territory, North Kivu, Delphin Mbaenda, commander of Mai-Mai Kifuafua, signed a road map to end and prevent child recruitment and other grave violations of the rights of the child. A mechanism was set up for implementing the road map. On 18 July, in Ziralo, Kalehe territory, South Kivu, Raymond Kabihula, Commander of Mai-Mai Raia Mutomboki (Ngubito faction), released 38 children to MONUSCO and signed a road map for the prevention of child recruitment and other grave violations of the rights of the child. MONUSCO continued to engage 17 commanders of different armed groups in Ituri, North Kivu and South Kivu for the release of children and the implementation of road maps to end child recruitment.

III. Deployment of MONUSCO and implementation of its mandate

A. Strategic dialogue and exit strategy

42. There was no progress in the strategic dialogue between the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo and MONUSCO.

B. Preparations to address risks linked to the electoral process

43. MONUSCO took measures to address risks linked to the electoral process, including by conducting a series of table-top exercises with field offices to strengthen crisis management capacities in the event of electoral violence, with a view to updating local protection contingency plans and ensuring linkages with humanitarian contingency planning. In addition, an exercise was carried out with the Security Management Team to strengthen capacities for crisis management, mainly in

Kinshasa, with a focus on enhancing communications facilities within the wider United Nations country team.

44. The concept of operations of the Mission's police component includes provisions to address electoral risks, with a focus on collaboration with the Congolese National Police, notably through the training and awareness-raising of its intervention units, to enhance crowd-control capacities and respect for human rights. The MONUSCO police developed training and advocacy programmes for 4,600 Congolese National Police officers in intervention units to reduce the risk of the excessive use of force during demonstrations or public gatherings in the electoral period.

45. The concept of operations of the Mission's force is geared towards the protection of civilians in vulnerable areas during the electoral period, supporting election security and ensuring the security of United Nations personnel and premises. The MONUSCO force, in coordination with other relevant Mission components, will support national security forces, where appropriate, to promote a protective environment for civilians and provide early warning of electoral violence through monitoring and reporting. Areas of responsibility have been reassigned and the force's sector boundaries redrawn with a view to achieving a swift pre-electoral deployment by the end of November.

46. Further steps have been taken by MONUSCO to strengthen its mobile monitoring and response teams as an initial response to threats of violence or to gather information on incidents. This mechanism enables analysis and enhances the understanding of events in certain areas through early warning networks, in particular in the western part of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, where MONUSCO has a limited presence. The mechanism will also support and provide a surge capacity, as necessary, for smaller field offices to address emerging political or security issues, especially in the lead-up to the elections.

C. Comprehensive approach to the protection of civilians

1. Mission-wide strategies

47. MONUSCO made progress in implementing the comprehensive approach to the protection of civilians. Two new Mission-wide strategies to address armed-group activities were developed for areas stretching from Ituri to Goma and covering South Kivu down to Haut-Katanga. The strategies entail such initiatives as local dialogue, stabilization, protective patrolling and the boosting of early warning capacities and rapid response to alerts, as well as support to justice and human rights activities. Progress was also made in developing targeted strategies to address the threat posed by armed groups, including ADF.

48. MONUSCO continues to implement the "protection through projection" concept. During the reporting period, MONUSCO deployed 59 standing combat deployments, mainly in response to threats posed to civilians by ADF, and to prevent and deter violence by other armed elements. The Intervention Brigade of the force around Beni thus deployed 34 deployments (58 per cent), three rapidly deployable battalions in eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo deployed 10 (17 per cent), while the remaining 15 (25 per cent) were deployed by framework battalions and other MONUSCO force assets. Furthermore, MONUSCO continued to expand its Community Alert Network systems. The Network transmitted an average of 492 early warning alerts per month, mainly from North Kivu, South Kivu and Tanganyika. The Government, MONUSCO or both actors responded to 87 per cent of those alerts. The alerts not responded to were in areas with limited presence of national security forces and areas of difficult access.

2. Field-level responses

49. On 31 July, in Beni territory, North Kivu, MONUSCO and FARDC launched a joint offensive operation against three Mai-Mai camps that were established close to the town of Beni and presented an imminent threat to civilians. The operation resulted in the destruction of the camps, the capture of a number of armed group elements and the seizure of weapons by FARDC. In addition, throughout August and September, MONUSCO increased the number of standing combat deployments and patrols in the Beni area, with the aim of increasing presence, situational awareness and engagement with communities. Still in the Beni area, MONUSCO also engaged customary chiefs, who signed a deed of commitment to addressing grievances and promoting peaceful cohabitation. Furthermore, MONUSCO supported a consultative committee for the resolution of customary conflicts in Beni. In Lubero territory, following the FARDC operation against NDC-R in August, MONUSCO deployed a Joint Protection Team to assess protection needs and risks, with a focus on reducing the risks of retaliatory acts by NDC-R against civilians.

50. In Djugu territory, Ituri province, MONUSCO continued to support the ongoing peace process following the outbreak of violence at the beginning of the year. MONUSCO maintained three deployments in key flashpoints, which assisted in creating a protective environment and enabled MONUSCO to respond to potential violence. The presence of MONUSCO also led to the return of internally displaced persons and contributed to the provincial government's efforts to address the underlying causes of violence between Hema and Lendu communities. MONUSCO continued to support the Government's peace-awareness campaign launched in June, with dialogues held among Djugu customary chiefs, young people and female leaders.

51. Starting on 9 July, in South Kivu, in response to the alarming situation in the Bijombo area of the high plateaux, MONUSCO deployed a series of standing combat deployments to stabilize the area and provide a protective environment for the provincial government to launch mediation efforts. The MONUSCO deployments had an immediate positive impact, with an end to large-scale attacks. MONUSCO civilian personnel deployed along with the standing combat deployments conducted investigations into human rights abuses, gathered further information on the situation and engaged in conflict-resolution efforts at the local level. Elsewhere in South Kivu, in Kalehe and Shabunda territories, in response to the violence affecting civilians, in particular women, MONUSCO conducted multiple long-range patrols to increase its presence in the area and encouraged the authorities to strengthen the presence of national security forces.

52. In Tanganyika province, MONUSCO continued to reinforce local protection committees in Kalemie and Nyunzu to address increasing insecurity. In August, in Haut-Katanga, in particular in Pweto territory, MONUSCO supported the provincial government's awareness-raising campaign on peaceful cohabitation between the Twa and Luba communities, which contributed to an improvement in the security situation and the return of internally displaced persons and of refugees from Zambia.

53. In July, in the Kasai region, MONUSCO deployed a standing combat deployment to Kamako, an important urban centre on the border between Angola and the Democratic Republic of the Congo, to stabilize the area and support the deployment of two Joint Protection Team missions. During those missions, MONUSCO engaged with local authorities and civil society to promote peaceful cohabitation between the Luba, Pende and Chokwe communities.

54. The Mine Action Service of the United Nations continued to contribute to the protection of civilians and the freedom of movement for MONUSCO and humanitarian personnel through explosive ordnance disposal activities before and

after operations against armed groups. The Service also provided support for the destruction of obsolete, surplus and unserviceable munitions and stockpiles of small arms ammunition held by troop-contributing countries.

D. Support for the sanctions regime imposed on the Democratic Republic of the Congo

55. The Group of Experts on the Democratic Republic of the Congo, whose mandate was extended by the Security Council in its resolution 2424 (2018), undertook, with the support of MONUSCO, its first visit to Kinshasa and eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo in early September, in line with its mandate. MONUSCO provided security-related advice and continued to monitor the implementation of the arms embargo in collaboration with the Group.

E. Disarmament, demobilization and reintegration, and disarmament, demobilization, repatriation, resettlement and reintegration

56. From July to mid-August, MONUSCO registered the surrender of 28 children associated with armed groups and 33 adult combatants of armed groups of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, operating chiefly in North Kivu. An additional 17 foreign combatants and dependants were registered, as well as two children associated with armed groups who were separated from ADF in Beni. MONUSCO also supported the awareness-raising visits of representatives of the regional follow-up mechanism on the repatriation of disarmed combatants and their dependants to camps of the ex-Mouvement du 23 mars (ex-M23) in Uganda, from 19 to 25 July, and to the voluntary disarmament process camps of the Forces démocratiques de libération du Rwanda (FDLR) in Kanyobagonga, Kisangani and Walungu, from 23 to 27 August. Those visits resulted in the repatriation of 13 ex-M23 members to the Democratic Republic of the Congo and five FDLR members to Rwanda.

57. MONUSCO is implementing 26 community violence reduction projects in eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo. These projects contribute to improving the security situation by involving young people at risk, ex-combatants and community members in income-generating activities, such as building community infrastructure, psychosocial support and vocational training. A number of labour-intensive infrastructure projects were completed, providing initial employment to ex-combatants and at-risk community members. Those projects included the rehabilitation of essential road segments, with the aim of improving access to remote areas, markets and commerce and facilitating the movement of national security forces and MONUSCO.

F. Stabilization

58. In July, the Prime Minister signed a decree creating 15 courts of appeal in the Democratic Republic of the Congo in the new provinces created through the province restructuring, raising the total number of those courts to 27. Subsequently, 215 judges and prosecutors were appointed to the Supreme Court, the Council of State, the courts of appeal and public prosecutor's departments. In the absence of administrative courts, the courts of appeal will play a key role with respect to electoral disputes at the provincial level.

G. Progress in adjusting MONUSCO priorities, posture and presence

59. MONUSCO continued to streamline its civilian efforts, focusing primarily on the protection of civilians and support for the political process, including electoral support.

60. During the reporting period, MONUSCO initiated the implementation of the deployment of the Mission for 2018–2019, through the elections period. Following the adoption of the Mission's budget for the financial period 2018–2019, the Mission is adjusting its footprint further. As part of the restructuring of the force, MONUSCO had repatriated 1,528 troops by the end of August to make room for the two incoming rapidly deployable battalions, numbering 1,700 personnel. MONUSCO plans to base its fourth rapidly deployable battalion (Indonesia) in Tanganyika to address protection concerns in that area, and its fifth rapidly deployable battalion (Morocco) in the Kasai region. Once deployed, the force sector boundaries will be redrawn to ensure ease of command and control and align force sectors with field office areas of responsibility. MONUSCO continued to engage the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo on the need to facilitate the expeditious entry into its territory of the weapons and equipment of the rapidly deployable battalions in order for MONUSCO to fulfil its task of protecting civilians, as mandated by the Security Council.

61. Meanwhile, the reconfiguration of the Intervention Brigade continued, with a view to making it more flexible, agile and able to both conduct offensive operations and protect civilians across North Kivu, while battalions from the central sector of the MONUSCO force, formerly deployed in Boikene, Butembo and Mavivi, were consolidated further south in North Kivu.

62. Plans were developed to make some adjustments to the deployment of the Mission's formed police units, which are to provide protection to civilians and United Nations staff and premises, in key urban hotspots. One such unit was expected to relocate from Bukavu to Lubumbashi by the end of September, and another from Bunia to Kisangani. By the end of October, one unit will relocate from Goma to Kisangani and another from Beni to Lubumbashi.

H. Assessment of the performance of MONUSCO uniformed personnel to protect civilians

63. In June 2017, MONUSCO started the systematic use of the measurement of force effectiveness process to assess the performance of its troops. The process combines operational readiness and contingent-owned equipment inspections with aspects of command and control. It also assesses the resolve of the units to implement assigned tasks related to the protection of civilians, the neutralization of armed groups and support for the Government's armed forces, in line with the campaign plan of the force. Critical assessment criteria include discipline, notably with respect to sexual exploitation and abuse and road traffic accidents. At the end of the inspection cycle, a force commander's assessment is issued. In the context of the implementation of the action plan to improve the safety of peacekeepers, this tool has become a key reference for reporting on the force performance and has influenced decisions about future force generation.

64. MONUSCO has populated the tool on a quarterly basis and a total of 44 assessments had been carried out by September, as required in resolution 2409 (2018). Of the 44 units evaluated, 75 per cent (33 units) were found to be above average, while the performance of 4.5 per cent (two units) was deemed to be substandard. Of the units found to be performing below average, key areas for improvement included training, equipment, conduct and discipline, and health.

65. The police component has also implemented a performance evaluation system based on objective criteria for both individual police officers and formed police units, with a view to assessing their capacity to implement mandated tasks, including the protection of civilians in urban areas through the integrated operational strategy for the fight against insecurity. Individual police officers were evaluated on a quarterly basis, with no performance issues identified thus far. Formed police units are evaluated through monthly operational inspections, and one unit was identified through this process as requiring reinforced capacity.

66. Both the force and police component used the assessment to address shortcomings and implement corrective measures. Those included training, targeted inspections and spot checks to confirm the serviceability of equipment, and specific training on how to prepare a robust response in case of patrols coming under attack by armed elements or an angry mob. Command and control field visits by the force and the police, as well as the MONUSCO civilian leadership, continue to be carried out on a regular basis to identify areas for improvement and ensure follow-up. The results of the evaluations carried out in the context of the measurement of force effectiveness process have also been taken into account in the planning and implementation of the ongoing reconfiguration of the MONUSCO force.

I. Serious misconduct, including sexual exploitation and abuse

67. MONUSCO continued to enforce the United Nations zero-tolerance policy on sexual exploitation and abuse. In addition to the internal preventive measures currently implemented, the Mission has engaged with the communities exposed to sexual exploitation and abuse with the aim of building their capacity to identify and process complaints of sexual exploitation and abuse, implemented community-based compliance mechanisms and intensified its outreach programme.

68. As far as the local population is concerned, this novel approach includes community awareness-raising, open-forum discussions and sharing the outcome of investigations and actions taken. As regards MONUSCO personnel, efforts focused on direct interaction with and support for troop-contributing countries, close monitoring of the behaviour of personnel, deterrent activities by military police patrols and the distribution of pocket cards on the prevention of sexual exploitation and abuse. A risk management framework was also developed and implemented through an action plan. Accountability is implemented through a comprehensive coordination mechanism and the direct involvement of field-level managers and unit commanders.

69. MONUSCO also conducted mass awareness-raising campaigns in communities located in areas at risk, with a view to providing vulnerable and affected populations with safe and efficient reporting mechanisms and making them aware of the United Nations policy prohibiting sexual exploitation and abuse.

J. Gender considerations in mandate implementation

70. MONUSCO continues to make progress in improving and monitoring its gender responsiveness, using the gender markers accountability framework. Three quarters of the Mission's offices included in their priority functions concrete elements to measure how peace and security initiatives took into account the needs of women and men. For example, after analysing its sex-disaggregated data, the United Nations Joint Human Rights Office increased the proportion of women among the beneficiaries of its capacity-building programme, from a fifth in 2017 to a third by the end of July 2018.

71. MONUSCO also supported young urban women in actively spreading the principles of peaceful communication among young people in vulnerable neighbourhoods in Kinshasa and in eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo, to prevent possible violent clashes with the police and the army before, during or after the elections. More than 1,000 young people (694 women and 330 men) were trained on how to voice their opinions while adopting a peaceful communication approach.

72. MONUSCO hosted weekly meetings with 22 female politicians affiliated with different political parties and civil society, to exchange views on the opportunities for and the challenges of being candidates and on how to help to mobilize voters and win seats.

K. Safety and security of United Nations personnel

73. From 29 June to 16 August, a total of 131 security- and safety-related incidents affecting United Nations staff, uniformed personnel, assets and operations were recorded throughout the Democratic Republic of the Congo. Those included 62 crime-related incidents, 51 hazard-related accidents, 11 incidents of civil unrest and 7 incidents attributed to armed conflict. Fifty-four national staff members and 27 international staff members were affected by those incidents.

74. In North Kivu, access to some areas within Beni territory remained a challenge, owing to continued sporadic clashes between ADF, Mai-Mai militias, FARDC and MONUSCO. As a result, movements of staff members to areas of operation of ADF were occasionally restricted or suspended.

IV. Observations

75. I am encouraged by continued progress in the preparations for the holding of elections on 23 December. I commend the leadership demonstrated by President Joseph Kabila and the efforts of the Independent National Electoral Commission to ensure that key milestones in the electoral process are met. The publication of the final list of candidates for the presidential, national and provincial legislative elections are encouraging steps. I regret, however, the low number of female candidates, despite commitments by political stakeholders to promoting actively the participation of women in the political and electoral process.

76. As the date of the elections draws nearer, I encourage key political actors to reach a consensus on outstanding contentious issues, including the use of voting machines and the voter register. I urge them to pursue dialogue and seek compromise in order to generate confidence in the electoral process and ensure a level electoral playing field for all. To this end, I reiterate my call to the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo to continue to fully implement the confidence-building measures contained in the political agreement of 31 December 2016.

77. I remain concerned about the arbitrary arrests and lengthy detentions of opposition members and civil society activists by the intelligence services, as well as instances of repression of public demonstrations, all of which work against the creation of an environment conducive to holding credible, transparent and inclusive elections. I call upon the authorities to ensure that all citizens of the Democratic Republic of the Congo enjoy their civil and political rights.

78. I welcome the Government's decision to fully fund the elections and encourage it to ensure regular disbursements to the Independent National Electoral Commission in order to guarantee that key milestones in the electoral calendar are met. I reiterate

the readiness of the United Nations to provide technical and logistical support to the Commission, as mandated by the Security Council.

79. I remain deeply concerned by the security situation and the increase in the activities of armed groups in different provinces, especially renewed activities by ADF in North Kivu, as well as attacks on the civilian population, FARDC and MONUSCO, leading to the displacement of thousands of people, the destruction of livelihoods and the interruption of schooling. I am equally worried by the escalation of intercommunal violence in the Kasai region, South Kivu and Tanganyika. I urge the authorities to take the steps necessary to protect civilians, with the support of MONUSCO, and I call upon all stakeholders to act responsibly to promote social cohesion, especially during the electoral period. I am concerned about the continued activities of foreign armed elements on Congolese soil and recent clashes at the border.

80. Renewed intercommunal violence and armed group activities continue to have a negative impact on the humanitarian situation. Only 24 per cent of funding requirements for 2018 have been met so far, which undermines the ability of the United Nations to support the most vulnerable. It is therefore crucial that commitments made by donors be met, in order to close the financing gap quickly. I welcome the joint efforts of the authorities of the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the humanitarian community to work in a concerted manner to assess humanitarian needs in order to ensure the targeted and seamless delivery of humanitarian assistance in 2019.

81. The recurring outbreak of the Ebola virus disease in the Democratic Republic of the Congo requires continued vigilance. I commend the Government for its swift response and leadership. The United Nations system, including WHO and its partners, remains committed to supporting the Government in its efforts to treat the victims of the disease and prevent it from spreading further.

82. Finally, I thank my Special Representative, Leila Zerrougui, for her leadership and dedication, and all personnel of MONUSCO and the United Nations country team, as well as the troop- and police-contributing countries, for their commitment to the Democratic Republic of the Congo. I also commend the efforts of regional organizations, bilateral and multilateral partners and non-governmental organizations for their continued support to the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

MONUSCO
September 2018
MONUSCO Headquarters
Force Forward Headquarters
Brigade Headquarters
Sector Headquarters
Formed Police Unit
Logistics base
Military Sector boundary
International boundary
Provincial boundary
National capital
CENTRAL AFRICAN REPUBLIC
SOUTH SUDAN
UGANDA
DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF THE CONGO
RWANDA
BURUNDI
UNITED REPUBLIC OF TANZANIA
ANGOLA
ZAMBIA
MALAWI
CONGO
ATLANTIC OCEAN
Bangui
Kinshasa
Brazzaville
Luanda
Bujumbura
Kampala
Bandundu
Kisangani
Lubumbashi
Goma
Bukavu
Kindu
Kananga
Kolwezi
Mbuji-Mayi
Kalemie
Uvira
Moanji
Hombi
Sake
Adikivu & Kavumbu
Sango
Kivuanja
Rwindi
Nyungu
Itutambo